

## RELIGION IN THE PHILIPPINES.

Some Tribes Have None by Instinct—Superstition Very Prominent.

Numerous Deities.

By HYLAND C. KIRK.

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If one happens to be living in a Moro town of the Philippines, and hears a great outcry in the neighborhood, or native house, accompanied by such sounds as "Saguit-casquit, luanuan ulu lali!" "Griet-sorrow on my head!" he may feel tolerably sure that some member of that family is dead and that the funeral services have promptly begun. If the deceased is a dato or person of prominence, a crowd will assemble in front of the house, presently lantacas, and perhaps cannon, will be brought, the panditas or priests will enter, and amid the hulls and shouting and the beating of gongs, possibly the alternation of prayers and lamentation within; all confusedly blending to produce a most complete prodigious discord.

Yet this is an entirely consistent manifestation of Moro character and faith. In the lamentations, his sorrow is evidenced so that all may be duly impressed; the prayers are for the safety of the departed spirit; while the beating of the gongs and the shouting are intended to intimidate the black angels seeking to torture the lonely soul on its perilous way across Titay, Magupat, the narrow bridge, no wider than the single leaf of a banana leaf, and over which, yet long and deep as Dunia (the world), over which all mankind must sooner or later pass. If no evil impedes, this transit is made swifter than killing the lightning flash; but if the soul is hindered with sin, the Miadadai Maitem (black angels) are sure to divert its course and it drops into pigas di macedad, or bottomless pit, where, with fiends and blasphemers, these torments come not from sulphurous flames, but are inflicted by ebony-hued imps armed with cunningly contrived implements for that purpose. After the body is buried, the pandita, the head of a cock is placed on the grave, with a live coal upon it, a symbolic warning to the same dusky spirits not to interfere with the course of the departed. At times visits are made to the grave, and the lonely one is encouraged in his contest with the dark powers of the mid-world by repeated cries of: "Panguingulike di!" (Have no fear), "ulu muanuan!" (Speak boldly), and "simul!" (Advance). Sometimes places are made for the refreshment of travelers and to secure their good will.

There is usually some relation indicated between burial customs and ideas of a future life. The Samales of Mindanao prior to their conversion were accustomed to bury their dead in coffins made of two pieces of wood, one fitting the other. These were placed upon elevated platforms with a thatched covering, in natural caverns, or excavations in rocks. Food of various sorts was also placed near, but this was for the benefit of the departed rather than the living.

## FEASTS OF THE FUNERAL.

The Subanos, in their burial customs, convert the sacrifices to Dinata-salungit, the god of heaven, into a feast, in which they consume without uttering a word, and conclude by turning all the dead, pans and kettles upside down. The day after death the body is wrapped in sail-cloth and placed in a grave, three or four feet deep near the house of the deceased, and the internment is made on a framework of canes at the bottom of the grave, covered with leaves. The body in its wrappings is placed on this and other framework constructed above it, upon which food, clothing and the weapons of the deceased, if a warrior, are placed. The grave is then filled in with great care, and the funeral feast is held. The period of mourning is concluded on the eighth day, when another feast is held and chickens, eggs, rice, buho and tobacco and numerous quantities of deer-beer are consumed. Singing and dancing and a palaver follow; and the feast concludes with a ceremony in which the priest formally transfers the soul of the deceased to the celestial realm, and respectfully begs him to go quietly along with Dinata-salungit, and make no more trouble for his friends.

The Monteses, who occupy the mountain region of north central Mindanao, bury their warriors in the open country, with spear, kris, and bolo beside them. Crossed stakes are fixed over the grave upon which a protective covering of bark or nipa is stretched. The body is suspended from above the tomb, that the defunct may have food sufficient to sustain him on his way to the top of Mount Balatacan, from whose summit each soul takes a large eagle and flies to a high up in Heaven, or in the lowest depths, according to the deeds done in the body. After making this great leap there is no chance or possibility of the soul's rising higher; it must through eternal fire at the level attained in that leap. They make great ado when a death occurs, something after the manner of the Moros, and when the deceased is held in great respect the period of mourning is extended to a month. Among the mountain tribes this period is always indicated by the long flowing hair, which is unrolled during this time and allowed to hang freely. The hair is never cut, but is rolled into a knot and tied with a musala, or kerchief.

## SCARING DEATH WITH NOISE.

When one of the Tagbanuas of Palawan is found to be very sick, his friends gather with horns, gongs and drums, and give a concert outside the invalid's abode with a view to cheering him up and frightening away the evil spirit that torments him. Meanwhile, the sick man is allowed to approach the sick person, and after the demonstration is over he is generally willing to die; at least strangers in the islands who have heard it agree that no person in the best of health could be fairly expected to survive such a horrible noise. At all events, it is the practice for the person about to die to settle the details of his funeral in advance, and while he is alive, and tell the effects, quantity of food, clothing and weapons he desires buried with him. Immediately after death the floor is carefully sprinkled with ashes, and all relatives and attendants retire for a time. Then they cautiously return and examine the ashes; for it sometimes happens that the soul in leaving its life tenement, also leaves its footprints in the ashes of the floor.

After this examination is over, they locate the grave according to the direction of the deceased, and the spot is likely to be fixed by the beneficiary of the floor or in the cleared space about his dwelling. The grave is then prepared, and the body, dressed in its best apparel, together with the working tools and weapons of the dead, and a liberal supply of provisions, are placed therein. A circle is formed, and a low, plaintive dirge is chanted, known as the latal, in honor of the departed. Then the house and grounds are abandoned forever.

## CONSULTING THE CORPSE.

In the Calamianes north of Palawan, a funeral of the Tagbanuas is conducted somewhat differently; it is not the living person that selects his burial place, but to his demise, but the corpse. According to Professor Worcester: "The corpse is dressed in good clothes, and relatives and friends are summoned. The family of the deceased person make a certain place, and ask if he wishes to be buried there. Then they lift the corpse. If it seems light, the answer is considered to be affirmative, and if heavy, they try again and again until some place has been chosen and is satisfactory to the departed, when the corpse suddenly becomes light. It is carried to the chosen spot, even if very distant, and may be buried in the earth, in a

grave, or placed on a rude platform in a tree. All the belongings of the deceased, except such bare necessities as may be needed by his immediate relatives, are left at the head of his grave. The mourners return to his house and when evening comes build a fire in front of it, waiting in silence until the wood is all consumed, and watching the dying embers. They say that they sometimes see their dead friends, sometimes only his footprints, in the ashes of the fire. Five days later all again return to the house. A bamboo pole is set up in the middle of the floor, with rattans attached to its top, the whole affair somewhat resembling a May-pole. Each person sits down, grasping the end of one of the rattans, and all begin to chant the "latal," a strange and very lengthy song, which recites the whole adventures of a mythical person named Dumacoral. The latal is handed down from generation to generation, and must have originated at a time when the ancestors of the Calamianes Tagbanuas were far more civilized than are the present representatives of the tribe; for in its reference is made to articles which those of this generation do not possess, and would not understand the use of. The singing of the latal is kept up on three successive nights, from dusk until daybreak. The singers stop occasionally to eat, and sometimes dance in order to keep themselves awake. The performance is repeated after the rice harvest, and even a third time, if the relatives can afford to pay for the food necessary to keep the participants in good spirits. A house where a death has occurred is always abandoned.

## PROTECTION FROM THE DEAD.

The ancient Visayans buried their dead in well-constructed wooden coffins made of two pieces of a solid log, the opening just large enough to admit the body by packing it in closely, so as not to invite the entrance of the evil spirits. The coffin was filled with earth, and the lid was similarly made, but shallow. These coffins were locked, and in the case of ancestors and heroes were placed on cliffs and in caverns, while the living were buried in the earth, and the coffins were guarded by passing sailors. Various implements, arms, apparel, and sometimes jewels of the deceased, were placed with the coffin. Sometimes a guard was placed over it for a week, and the old writer noted that for the purpose of protecting the corpse and its furnishings, but to protect living sailors who might be tempted there lest the dead person should snatch their lives. The ancient Moro writer noted that the dead with aromatic substances and placed those who were of note in chests carved out of a branch of a tree, and furnished with the old writer noted that the dead, expressed before his death, either in the uppermost room of the house, where articles of value were secured, or in a cave, and the entrance was kind of grave, which was not covered, but enclosed with a railing; or in a distant field, or on an elevated place, or on the bank of a river, where he would be reached by the wind. A watch was set over it for a certain time, lest boats should cross over, and the dead person should drag the living after him. According to another authority, Gaspar, "The dead were rolled up in clothes, and placed in clumsy chests, carved out of a block of wood, and buried under their houses, together with their jewels, gold rings, and some plates of gold over the mouth and eyes, and furnished with provisions, cups and dishes."

Ancestral worship seems to have gained a foothold early among the Visayans; for it was the ambition of the aged when about to die to choose as their places of interment, some conspicuous spot in a mountain top, or projecting headland of the sea, that they might be venerated by mariners who passed. Numerous bones and sea-caves along the shores of the Visayan Islands, are still pointed out where such interments were made. Jagor, who visited the islands in 1850 and 1850, describes one method employed in brooding this practice. He says: "About 30 years ago a zealous young ecclesiastic, to whom these heathen practices were an abomination, determined to extirpate them by the roots. With several boats, each equipped with crosses, banners, pictures of saints, and all the approved machinery for driving out the devil, he undertook the expedition against the haunted rocks, which were climbed and eyes, and the sound of music, prayers, and the report of fireworks. A whole painful of holy water first having been thrown into the cave for the purpose of confounding the evil spirits, the interment priest rushed in, and was followed by his faithful com-

panion, who were fired with his example. The bold and successful venture was a well-contrived and carefully-executed plot. The coffins were broken to fragments, the vessels dashed to pieces, and the skeletons thrown into the sea; and the remaining bones were strewed with like results. The objects of superstition were indeed annihilated, but the superstition itself survives to the present day."

BAKED BEFORE BURIAL.

Some of the pagan tribes of northern Luzon bake or dry their dead, until the moisture has nearly all evaporated, before burying them. Such is the practice of the unconverted Tingguans, and with some of the Igorrotes. Gironiere gives a graphic account of visiting a tribe of Tingguans, where he found flames issuing from under a cabin, a large fire being in progress there, with many people sitting about, howling like wolves. He describes the corpse as seated in the middle of the cabin upon a stool, with one large fire under it, and a smaller one on the other side, the dying-dishes at his side. The mourners and assistants, some 30 in number, were seated around in a circle, and 10 or 12 women formed another circle. From time to time one of the party spoke in a low, harmonious tone, concluding with a sort of laugh which was imitated by all the assistants; then they ate some pieces of dried meat, drank beer, and engaged in a dance. Next, beginning with the nearest relative, each one made a speech in praise of the deceased, and the fire was renewed. When the provisions were ex-

hausted the neighbors and friends left, but the relatives kept the fire going for a fortnight, when the body was thoroughly dried and placed in a hole under the house, to be subsequently placed in a niche of the wall where other deceased relatives had been deposited.

## MOURNING THE DEAD BODY.

In Lepanto Province when a prominent Igorrote dies his relatives are notified promptly, and the burial does not occur till all have arrived. They gather about him while the feast is in progress, and each relative, beginning with the eldest, taking the hand of the dead in his arms, asks him in a kindly but serious tone, why he has felt thus constrained to leave his family and friends? Igorrote coffins are usually square, with an oval top, and the dead are interred sitting. The coffins are placed in caves or clefts of the rock, and surrounded by the arms, clothing and ornaments of the departed.

While the Roman Catholic burial service in the Philippines does not differ essentially from that in other countries, there were certain incidents under the old regime which are not practiced and would not be tolerated by Catholics in the United States. One was the practice of exhuming the bones of the buried after a certain time, if the rent of the grave was not paid, and throwing them into a common hole, where they were exposed to the gaze of the curious. In nearly every large town occupied by our troops, devout Catholics among the soldiers were shocked at these displays. The practice was discontinued at the Paco Cemetery, Manila, after American occupation.

## A REALLY UNDESIRABLE HELL.

Whatever his belief in a future life, if he really possesses one, the ideas of the Philippine native are likely to be very definite. The singular notion of the lives in hell, but he does not believe in hell-fire. While there may not be strikes among the tribes, there are many who are in hell, but he does not believe in hell-fire. While there may not be strikes among the tribes, there are many who are in hell, but he does not believe in hell-fire. While there may not be strikes among the tribes, there are many who are in hell, but he does not believe in hell-fire.

## TYPE OF "BACK-DISTRICT" TAGAL.

among the workmen of that lurid realm, the Moro doubts its capacity to supply fuel necessary to sustain an endless conflagration. The performance is repeated after the death of the deceased, and the entrance was kind of grave, which was not covered, but enclosed with a railing; or in a distant field, or on an elevated place, or on the bank of a river, where he would be reached by the wind. A watch was set over it for a certain time, lest boats should cross over, and the dead person should drag the living after him. According to another authority, Gaspar, "The dead were rolled up in clothes, and placed in clumsy chests, carved out of a block of wood, and buried under their houses, together with their jewels, gold rings, and some plates of gold over the mouth and eyes, and furnished with provisions, cups and dishes."

There are differences of belief among the Moros as to heaven and hell. Some panditas assert that each sinner gets his hell on this earth before death; and others hold that the souls remain in the air until the Day of Judgment, when the weigher, assisted by Michael and Gabriel, will place each soul in the balance. Those laden with sin will sink into hell, and the pure spirits will rise to the lights of a Mohammedan Paradise. A Moro, Benjamin Franklin was once described to me, who had some opinions on many subjects, and had renounced the faith altogether; but he did not in the least territory, but in a town of the Camarines.

## MURDER TO PLEASE GOD.

The great majority of Moros are very fanatical, and believe that killing a Christian goes a long way toward finding favor with the bowels. Hence the stubborn resistance with which they have met the Spaniards, and their tendency to run amuck among Christians. That a similar tendency is sometimes found among Visayans, Tagalogs, and other tribes is true, but this is attributed by some to Mahometan teachings and influence prior to the advent of Spanish rule.

While it is impossible to determine the time when the Mahometan faith was implanted in these islands, there is no doubt that it was long prior to the discovery of Magellan. A short time before my arrival at a hotel in Iloilo, Panay, where I was stopped for several months, the former Calamian proprietor, a former Moro, named Gacha, and two others had been killed by a Christianized Visayan running amuck; and such cases are not infrequent. It is a question of whether this practice is not due rather to the influence of Islam; but there are other and stronger reasons for supposing that Mahometan domination extended for several centuries prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. I was assured was general among the Christianized tribes; a similarity in the ancient sects of the Teutons, Vikings, and other tribes, to the Arabs; that among the chiefs encountered in Luzon on their first arrival by Legaspi and others, several bore the name Soliman, suggestive of Moslem contact and ancestry; another circumstance is the case.

## Don't Wait Until It's Too Late.

Do you know what it means to cure constipation? It means to cure the bowels of the body all the way, and the misery caused by a clogged up system, and they are many. Constipation means that the bowels are not moving, and they do not keep up that constant motion that keeps peristaltic action. When that stops passages cease, the blood begins to absorb the poisons through the walls of the intestines, and thus the poisons are sent everywhere. Death often lays its foundation in this way. Torturing diseases like dyspepsia, indigestion, kidney troubles, liver complaints, rheumatism, headaches and a hundred and one other ailments start that way. A cure must come through toning up, strengthening and invigorating the bowels, and this can be easily, gently and permanently done by the use of Dr. J. R. Blackwell's, Not a liquor or patent medicine. A full list of ingredients and explanation of their action with each package. It is a cure of the highest class. 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